

Solvang Brick & Build contest winners shine at inaugural LEGO celebration

Santa Ynez Valley News Staff Report
Apr 15, 2025

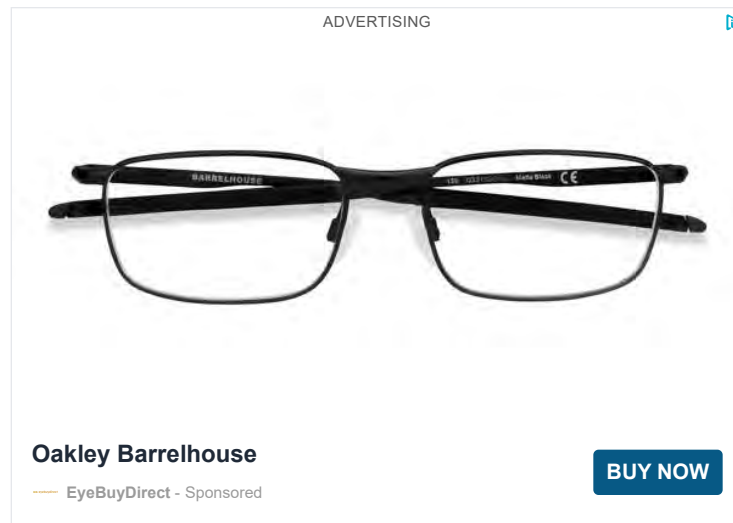


John Cooper accepts top honors for his imaginative “The Ugly Duckling” build, part of the town-wide Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale theme featured at the recent Solvang Brick & Build Contest held April 5-6.
Allyson Gail, Contributed

While Solvang’s first-ever Brick & Build event buzzed with activity — from expert panels to hands-on builds that drew nearly 1,000 attendees — the spotlight belonged to the standout contest winners whose LEGO creations stole the show.

Topping the list was John Cooper, who took home top honors for his imaginative “The Ugly Duckling” build, part of the town-wide Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale theme.

Cooper’s display, located in Solvang Park next to the famed Andersen bust, brought the beloved story to life and captured the spirit of Solvang’s Danish roots.



The festival and build contest coincided with the 220th birthday celebration of beloved storyteller Hans Christian Andersen — a nod to Solvang’s Danish roots, adding an extra layer of meaning to the festivities.



Inside the Veterans Hall expo, builders competed across themed categories, each showcasing impressive talent and originality. Winners included:

- Lia Von Damm – Best “Solvang” Themed Build
- Jesse Gros – Best “Space / Steampunk” Build
- Nino Guba – Best Art / Pop Culture Build, for his Ghostbusters RTV
- Bruce Heller – Best “LEGO City / Train” Build, featuring Brentwood Sunshine Preschool
- Shy – Best “Castle / Fantasy” Build

The Public Vote Award, chosen by visitors using raffle-style ballots, went to Scott Thomas for his vibrant and intricately designed coral reef scene, which wowed voters of all ages.

Event organizers have hinted at a possible return next year, with details forthcoming.

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🔗 [Solvang's inaugural Brick & Build Festival sparks imagination, community spirit](#)

🔗 [Solvang's Bricks and Builds event fills Veterans Memorial Building with imagination | Photos](#)

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Solvang Brick & Build Contest winners: PHOTOS

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The Solvang Brick & Build festival and LEGO contests coincided with the 150th birthday celebration of beloved storyteller Hans Christian Andersen — a nod to Solvang's Danish roots that added an extra layer of meaning to the colorful festivities.



The Public Vote Award, chosen by visitors using raffle-style ballots, went to Scott Thomas for his vibrant and intricately designed coral reef scene, which wowed voters of all ages.

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"Shy" won the best "Castle/ Fantasy" build, inside the Vets Hall expo during Solvang's inaugural Brick & Build Contest. SolvangUSA.com, Contributed



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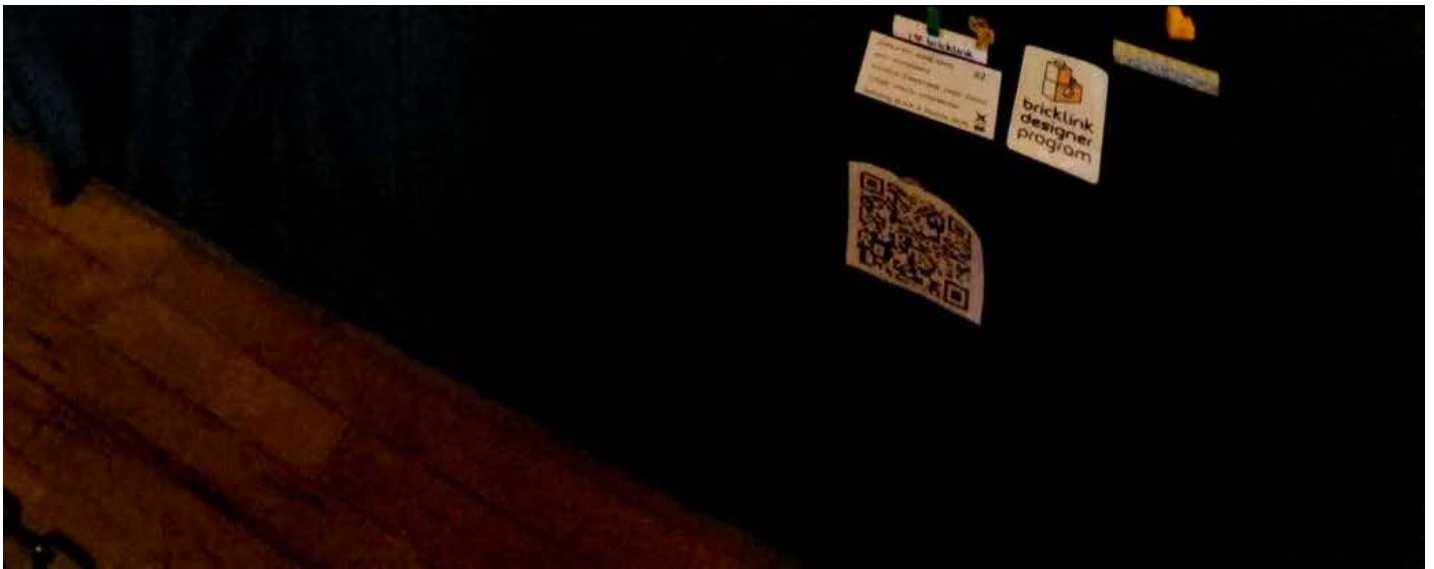
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Jesse Gros won the best "Space/ Steampunk" themed build, inside the Vets Hall expo during Solvang's inaugural Brick & Build Contest.

@allysongailbricks, contributed



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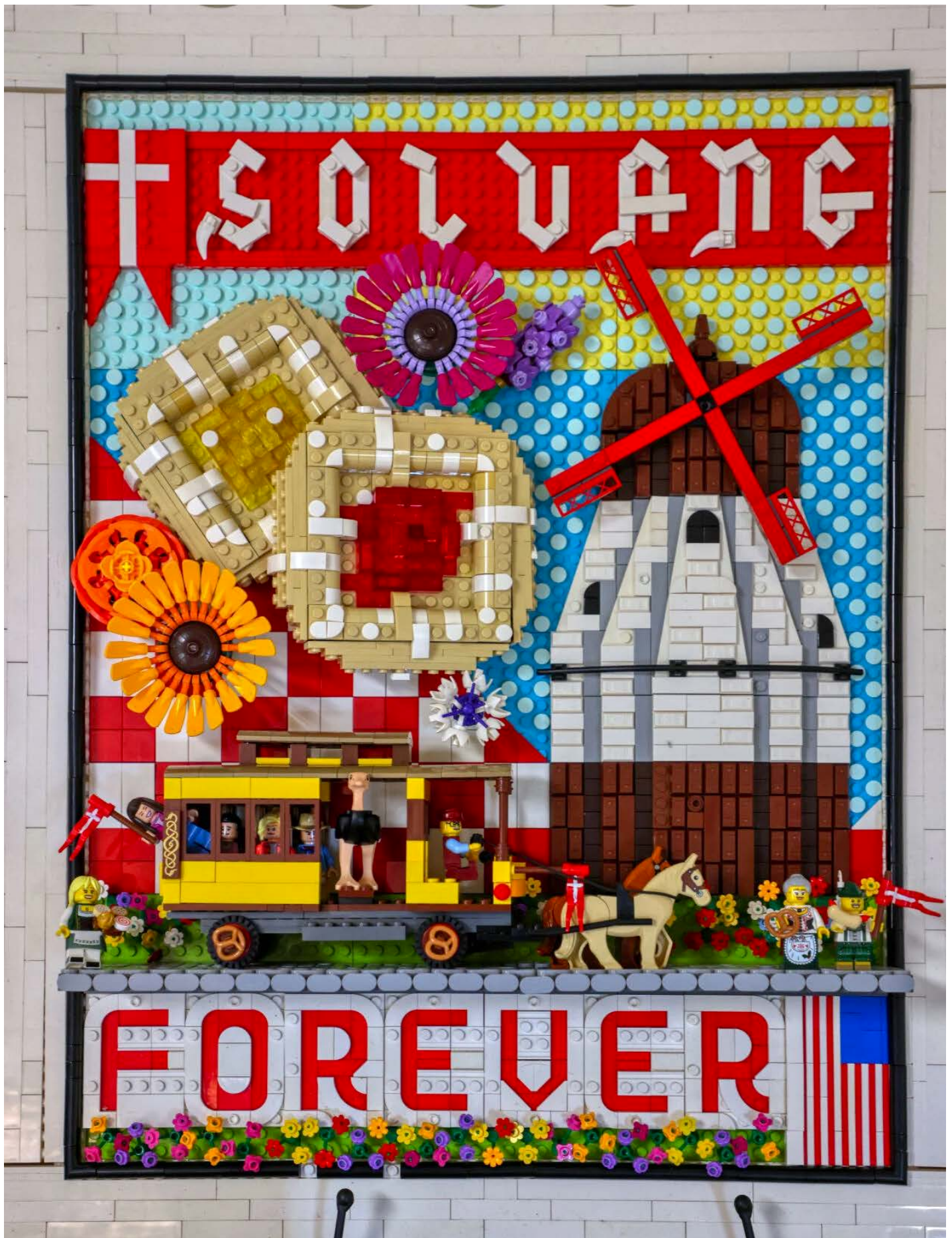
LEGO builder John Cooper begins his imaginative "The Ugly Duckling" build during the Solvang Brick & Build Contest. Cooper went on to win the the contest.

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John Cooper accepts top honors for his imaginative "The Ugly Duckling" build, part of the town-wide Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale theme featured at the recent Solvang Brick & Build Contest held April 5-6.

Allyson Gail, Contributed



Lia Von Damm won the best "Solvang" themed build, inside the Vets Hall expo during Solvang's inaugural Brick & Build Contest.

More information

- Solvang Brick & Build contest winners shine at inaugural LEGO celebration

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